in the amount of functional α_2-AP. Such a decrease can be obtained either by steric hindrance of the functional domain of α_2-AP or a clearance of the α_2-AP molecule from the plasma.

REMARKS

Claims 7-12 are currently pending in this application. Claim 7 has been amended. New claims 13 and 14 have been added. Reexamination and allowance of the claims are requested.

The Examiner has characterized the application as containing claims to four inventions: a method for the treatment of focal cerebral ischemic infarction by administering a neutralizing antibody or derivative thereof (Group I, containing claims 7-12); a method for the treatment of focal cerebral ischemic infarction by administering plasmin (Group II, containing claims 7-12), a method for the treatment of focal cerebral ischemic infarction by administering mini-plasmin (Group III, containing claims 7-12) and a method for the treatment of focal cerebral ischemic infarction by administering micro-plasmin (Group IV, containing claims 7-12).

The generic aim of the current invention is to reduce the concentration of functional α_2-AP for the treatment of focal cerebral ischemic infarction. Because the species mentioned in the application are all able to achieve this generic aim, all three species, as well as α_2-antiplasmin neutralizing compounds in general, should be regarded as able to serve as components of a single invention. In addition, all three species, as well as α_2-antiplasmin neutralizing compounds in general, share the same technical feature in that the aim of the invention is achieved by binding to α_2-AP.

The Manual for Patent Examination Practice provides instructions concerning the unity of an invention (Appendix AI, Annex B, pp. AI-53 – AI-68). An application should relate to only one invention or, if there is more than one invention, the inclusion of those inventions in one application is only permitted if all inventions are so linked as to form a single general inventive concept. Applicants believe that the present application contains either a single invention, or inventions sharing a general inventive concept. In either case, inclusion of the three claimed species, as well as α_2-antiplasmin neutralizing compounds in general, in a single application is appropriate.

Unity of invention exists when there is a technical relationship among the claimed inventions involving one or more of the same or corresponding technical features. Special technical features are those technical features that define a contribution which each of the inventions, considered as a whole, makes over the prior art. As noted previously, inactivation of alpha2-AP by binding is common to Groups I, II, III and IV and is the technical feature common to all the groups of claims. Therefore, the claims are drawn either to one invention, or a group of inventions that may properly be claimed in a single application.

The instructions also state that the question of unity of invention has to be considered only in relation to independent claims and not in relation to dependent claims. If the independent claims avoid the prior art and satisfy the requirement of unity of invention, no problem of lack of unity arises in respect to any claims that depend on the independent claims. Claim 7 has been amended, and claims 13 and 14 have been added, to make clear that the species claimed therein constitute a series in which smaller species are contained in, or are a subset of, larger species, and all claimed species contain a common technical feature.

In view of the foregoing the applicants respectfully request that the requirement of election among the claims of Groups I, II, III, and IV be withdrawn upon reconsideration. It is also submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the restriction and allowance of claims 7-14 are solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP AMENDED CLAIM

7. (Once Amended) A method for the treatment of focal cerebral ischemic infarction by administering at least one [compound that reduces] α_2-antiplasmin [*in vivo* in the form of a therapeutical composition, whereby the size of the focal cerebral ischemic infarct is reduced] neutralizing compound.